

## **Defining long-term care hospitals**

**ISSUE:** What role do long-term care hospitals (LTCHs) play? How are clinically similar patients treated in areas without LTCHs? How do Medicare payments and outcomes compare for patients who use LTCHs versus other settings? How can we better define LTCHs and the patients appropriate for them.

**KEY POINTS:** The chapter on MedPAC's LTCH research for the June 2004 report to the Congress synthesizes findings from MedPAC's qualitative and quantitative studies to answer research questions about LTCHs' role, how patients are treated in areas without LTCHs, and how Medicare spending and outcomes compare for patients who use these facilities and alternatives. Our study included:

- Thirty-four structured interviews with physicians, hospital administrators, nurses, and discharge planners in two market areas with and two market areas without long-term care hospitals
- Commissioner and staff site visits to long-term care hospitals in three cities with multiple LTCHs
- Quantitative analyses that included market level analyses to compare characteristics of patients treated in markets with and without LTCHS and patient-level analyses to examine the impact of LTCH use on Medicare spending and outcomes

At the April meeting we will present additional analyses and continue the discussion of LTCHs from the March meeting.

**ACTION:** Commissioners will discuss the draft chapter and recommendations.

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